

Safety Bulletin



COMMERCIAL POWER STRIPS THE HIDDEN INCENDIARY OIF SB-026



Recently there have been several minor fires and one total loss of a CHU including all contents, government equipment and personal belongings. While the causes of these fires vary, there has been one common denominator – electricity. There are several things that you as the individual can do to reduce the possibility of a fire and prevent injury / death or loss of property.

- If you are not using it, UNPLUG IT (The easiest fire prevention)
- Use the proper plug or adapter
- Do not over load the outlet, total the amps of the items plugged in to the power strip. Use caution, stay below the amps listed on the power strip
- Do not “Daisy Chain” power strips or extension cords
- Do not place power strips near combustibles (clothes, mattresses, ponchos, etc)
- Do not place P/C power packs, or rechargers on beds or flammables
- Do not coil electrical cords (generates resistance = heat)

Users must avoid heat build-up by completely unfolding cords before use. This allows the heat generated to dissipate. Periodically conduct visual inspections of electrical cords and power strips for melting, overheating, arcing, and frayed or cut wires. If one of the outlets on a power strip has gone bad, then the whole strip should be replaced.

Just because there are 15 different outlets on a power strip does not mean that it can handle that many items plugged into it. A general rule of thumb is that no more than 6 total amps should be drawn through a power strip. What this means is that the power strip you bought for 10 bucks is made of wire that is smaller than cheap speaker wire. If you don't believe it, check it out on one of the 20 or so bad ones in your unit area. Check out the “Using Electricity Safely in Iraq” video on the Portal under Safety for additional information.

